What is claimed is:

1. An Equine Herpes Virus wherein the nucleotide sequence encoding a protein gM is at least 70% absent and wherein the expression of the gene coding for the UL9 homolog (gene 53) is not affected.

2. An Equine Herpes Virus, wherein the nucleotides 93254 to 94264 as numbered for the virus strain EHV-1 Ab4p or corresponding thereto in other EHV strains are deleted.

3. The Equine Herpes Virus according to any one of claims 1 or 2 further comprising one or more heterologous genes.

4. The Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said virus is a type 1 or type 4 EHV.

5. A nucleic acid comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding the Equine Herpes Virus according to any one of claims 1 or 2.

6. A nucleic acid comprising a nucleotide sequence encoding the Equine Herpes Virus according to claim 3.

7. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the Equine Herpes Virus according to any one of claims 1 or 2; and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

8. A kit comprising in one or more containers: (a) isolated wild type protein gM; (b) the Equine Herpes Virus according to any one of claims 1 or 2; and (c) antibodies that specifically bind the wild type protein gM or the Equine Herpes Virus according to any one of claims 1 or 2.

9. A method for determining whether an animal is infected with a wild type Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) or is treated with the EHV according to any one of claims 1 or 2, comprising analyzing a nucleic acid encoding protein gM derived from the animal and comparing the nucleic acid from the animal with a nucleic acid encoding the wild type protein gM and a nucleic acid encoding the protein gM of the EHV according to any one of claims 1 or 2.

10. A method for determining whether an animal is infected with a wild type Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) or is treated with an EHV encoded by the nucleic acid of claim 5 comprising contacting an EHV nucleic acid encoding gM derived from the animal with a nucleic acid probe capable of specifically hybridizing to a nucleic acid encoding a wild type gM protein or the nucleic acid of claim 5, and measuring the amount of any hybridization of said probe.

11. A kit comprising in one or more containers a nucleic acid probe that is capable of specifically hybridizing to a nucleic acid comprising a sequence of nucleotides encoding a wild type Equine Herpes Virus protein gM or the nucleic acid of claim 5.

12. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the Equine Herpes Virus according to claim 3; and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

13. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the nucleic acid according to claim 5; and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

14. A method for improving the immune response induced by an Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) vaccine against wild type infections comprising administering EHV according to any one of claims 1 or 2.

15. A method for improving the immune response induced by an Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) vaccine against wild type infections comprising administering EHV according to claim 3.

16. A method for the prophylaxis or treatment of Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) in an animal comprising administering the pharmaceutical composition according to claim 7 to said animal.

17. A method for the prophylaxis or treatment of Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) in an animal comprising administering the pharmaceutical composition according to claim 12 to said animal.

18. A method for the prophylaxis or treatment of Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) in an animal comprising administering the pharmaceutical composition according to claim 13 to said animal.

19. A method for determining whether an animal is infected with a wild type Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) or is treated with the EHV according to any one of claims 1 or 2, comprising comparing an EHV protein gM derived from the animal with a wild type EHV protein gM and a protein gM of the EHV according to any one of claims 1 or 2.

20. A method for determining whether an animal is infected with a wild type Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) or is treated with the EHV according to any one of claims 1 or 2, comprising contacting an EHV protein gM derived from the animal with a wild type EHV protein gM or a protein gM of the EHV according to any one of claims 1 or 2, adding an antibody that specifically binds the wild type protein gM or the protein gM of the EHV according to any one of claims 1 or 2, and determining the binding of said antibody.